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Koopmans, R.

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Movements and media: Selection processes and evolutionary dynamics in the public sphere

RUUD KOOPMANS
Faculteit Sociale Wetenschappen, Vrije Universiteit/Free University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Abstract. This article argues that the decisive part of the interaction between social movements and political authorities is no longer the direct, physical confrontation between them in concrete locations, but the indirect, mediated encounters among contenders in the arena of the mass media public sphere. Authorities react to social movement activities if and as they are depicted in the mass media, and conversely movement activists become aware of political opportunities and constraints through the reactions (or non-reactions) that their actions provoke in the public sphere. The dynamics of this mediated interaction among political contenders can be analyzed as an evolutionary process. Of the great variety of attempts to mobilize public attention, only a few can be accommodated in the bounded media space. Three selection mechanisms–labelled here as "discursive opportunities" – can be identified that affect the diffusion chances of contentious messages: visibility (the extent to which a message is covered by the mass media), resonance (the extent to which others – allies, opponents, authorities, etc.–react to a message), and legitimacy (the degree to which such reactions are supportive). The argument is empirically illustrated by showing how the strategic repertoire of the German radical right evolved over the course of the 1990s as a result of the differential reactions that various strategies encountered in the mass media arena.

As the work of Charles Tilly[1] has shown us, before the advent of the modern, democratic nation-state, interactions between protesters, authorities, and publics were mostly localized, immediate, and direct. People would gather at the premises of a merchant, a landowner, or the seat of a local authority, and make their demands audible and visible by way of chants, slogans, petitions, or direct action such as the seizure of grain or physical attack on the wrongdoer. The power-holders thus addressed would respond in equally immediate and direct ways, by having the local police or private strongmen disperse the protesters, receiving a delegation to hear and respond to their grievances, or by themselves addressing the crowd, to rebut criticism or perhaps to announce concessions. Usually, neither of the parties directly involved in

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such events had a wider public in mind when they made their decisions on how to act or react, and if a public was relevant at all, it was the bystanders physically present at the event, who observed the spectacle and perhaps took sides by cheering or shouting abuse.

Such direct engagements between protesters, authorities, and publics have certainly not disappeared completely. Even in the age of globalization, many protests still take place where the targets of claims are located: in national capitals, in seats of supranational institutions such as Brussels, Geneva, or New York, or where state leaders gather for international summits, e.g., in Seattle, Davos, or Genoa. But nowadays protesters rarely get to see the addressees of their demands, nor do the latter directly observe, let alone engage, with the protesters. Bystander publics may still be present and occasionally they still cheer and boo, but it is no longer the co-present public that counts most, but the mass audience that sits at home and watches or reads the media coverage of the demonstration. In the context of mass electoral politics, the importance for both protesters and authorities of winning the sympathy of this audience has increased enormously. It is in the news media, moreover, that the most relevant part of the mutual observation and interaction between protesters and authorities takes place. Authorities will not react to – and will often not even know about – protests that are not reported in the media, and if they are reported, they will not react to the protests as they "really" were, but as they appeared in the media. If authorities find protests worthy of public response, that reaction is usually not communicated directly to the protesters by, say, calling up the organizers and expressing support for their cause, but by saying so in the media, and that message is usually not just addressed at the protesters and their sympathizers, but also at third parties such as political opponents and competitors, and last but not least at the elusive mass audience. Even in the case of the one still important form of direct engagement between protesters and authorities, namely that between the police and demonstrators, it is often more significant and consequential for both sides how their actions are depicted, evaluated, and reacted upon on the media stage than what actually happened on the scene.[2]

Of course, the crucial role of the mass media has not gone unnoticed by students of modern social movements and collective action. Several studies have dealt with the biases and distortions of the mass media from an activist point-of-view,[3] and others have developed recommendations for how activists can best cope with these biases and

turn them to their advantage.[4] The structure of biases in media coverage of protests was already addressed in a few studies in the 1970s,[5] and has become a core issue in social movement research in recent years as a result of the advance of media-based protest event analysis as a central methodological tool for the analysis of contentious politics.[6] While the media now occupy center stage from a methodological point-of-view, they have as yet not been given their due place in theorizing on social movements. Typically, in *Dynamics of Contention*, McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly's recent attempt to synthesize the social movement field and connect it to topics such as revolutions and democratization, one finds dozens of mechanisms and processes listed that are seen as relevant to explain contentious politics, but looks in vain for index entries such as "mass media," "public sphere," or "communication."[7] As a result of the studies into media selection and description biases, we now know a lot about the factors that determine if and how the media cover protest, but we have hardly begun to address the more important question of how media coverage of protest, and the wider discourse surrounding it, affect movements.

An exception to the lack of theoretical attention for the mass media's impact on social movements is the work of William Gamson.[8] In an important article with Gadi Wolfsfeld, the authors state:

> Movements need the news media for three major purposes: mobilization, validation, and scope enlargement. Regarding mobilization, most movements must reach their constituency in part through some form of public discourse. Public discourse is carried out in various forums, including the movement's own publications and meetings. But media discourse remains indispensable for most movements because most of the people they want to reach are part of the mass media gallery, while many are missed by movement-oriented outlets. (. . .) Beyond needing the media to convey a message to their constituency, movements need media for validation. The media spotlight validates the fact that the movement is an important player. Receiving standing in the media is often a necessary condition before targets of influence will grant a movement recognition and deal with its claims and demands. Conversely a demonstration with no media coverage at all is a nonevent, unlikely to have any positive influence on mobilizing followers or influencing the target. (. . .) Finally, movements need the media to broaden the scope of conflict (. . .) the introduction and subtraction of players alters the power relations between the contestants. Where the scope is narrow, the weaker party has much to gain and little to lose by broadening the scope, drawing third parties into the conflict as mediators or partisans.[9]

That modern social movements need to rely to an important extent on the media to reach constituencies, policy-makers, and third parties is one side of the picture, but what is missed in Gamson and Wolfsfeld's

analysis as well as in most other studies of the relation between protest and mass media is that the media are also crucial for the flow of communication in the reverse direction. Movement activists depend to a considerable degree on the mass media for information on the standpoints of authorities, third parties, and the larger public on the issues that concern them, and – because of the shift from immediate to mediated interaction – they learn about others' reactions to their actions from the news media. In other words, media discourse is both a crucial source of strategic information on which movement activists base their decisions, and a sounding board for the evaluation of strategies, and as such provides the crucial information input for a next round of interactions. What is true for social movement activists also holds for those with whom they interact, be they authorities, countermovements, or allies. All of them use the mass media as a crucial source of information on each other's views and behavior, and evaluate and adapt their own strategies as a result of the reactions they bring about in the public sphere.

In this article, I want to make a beginning with the development of a theoretical framework that puts the public sphere, and the mass media in particular, at the center of the analysis of political contention. Taking an evolutionary perspective on the dynamics of interaction in the public sphere, I emphasize a number of selective mechanisms – which I label "discursive opportunities" – that affect the diffusion chances of messages in the public sphere. Subsequently, I argue that such a focus on discursive opportunities and the evolutionary dynamics of communicative interaction can help resolve the long-standing problem of the linkage between opportunity structures and movement action. To put some empirical flesh on the theoretical bones, I will conclude the article with an illustration of my argument referring to evidence on the development of radical right violence and the media discourse surrounding it in Germany in the 1990s.

Before I continue to develop this argument, I would like to emphasize at the outset that what I advocate here is not a form of media reductionism. Obviously, even in our information age, there are significant aspects of contentious interaction that do not depend on the mass media. The media reality cannot replace the concrete feelings of solidarity and shared identity, and the accompanying emotions of joy or anger that are produced in concrete collective action and in direct confrontations with countermovements or security forces in the streets. In addition, indigenous networks and movement media are crucial as

internal channels of communication and as a counterbalance to the media images of a movement.[10] Furthermore, resourceful and institutionalized contenders, such as labor unions or employers associations, may have direct access to policy-makers that makes them less dependent on media attention, or may even make it advantageous for them to circumvent the media altogether. My aim is not to deny the relevance of extra-medial realities, but to call attention to the growing importance of whether and how these realities are reflected in the media. Co-present interactions will remain a crucial part of contentious politics, but the wider implications of such events depend increasingly on if and how they are communicated to relevant others who were not at the scene, be they movement adherents in other locations, competitors and political opponents, or authorities. That flow of communication, I argue, is channeled largely through the mass media, with all the selection and distortion that this entails.

Selection processes in the public sphere

The history of political contention is a hecatomb of failed attempts with few survivors. What Richard Cloward and Frances Fox Piven have observed long ago for poor people's movements,[11] is true for protest and collective action in general: most attempts to challenge existing policies and cultural codes remain marginal and inconsequential, and success, however measured, is the rare exception.[12] On an average day in a random Western democracy, thousands of press statements are issued by a variety of parties, interest groups, and movement organizations, hundreds of demonstrations, meetings, strikes, vigils, and other protests are staged, and numerous press conferences vie for the attention of the public and policy-makers. Almost every conceivable position regarding an extremely wide range of viewpoints is represented among this daily cacophony of messages, which call for some form of political or cultural change or seek the spread or implementation of a particular practice or policy. Away from the mainstream of issues that are generally considered important (e.g., unemployment, immigration) and positions on these issues that are considered legitimate at a particular time and place, each democratic society harbors a wide variety of groups who try to insert messages in the public sphere that are not generally held to be important or legitimate, e.g., the interests of pigeon breeders, or the call to revolution.

We easily ignore most of the voices in this chorus, for the simple reason that what we actually see and hear are only the select few that have in

one way or another been able to attract the attention of the media and are considered relevant enough by other social actors to elicit public responses from them. The reason for these strong selection pressures is that the public sphere is a bounded space for political communication characterized by a high level of competition. To be sure, the boundaries of the public sphere are not fixed, but can expand and contract over time. For instance, the rise of new channels of communication such as the Internet, or the multiplication of existing ones, e.g., through cable and satellite television, may expand the structural boundaries of the public sphere. At the same time, increasing commercialization of the media and a shift toward entertainment and human interest rather than political content may lead to a contraction of the communicative space available for political discourse. In addition to such more structural and long-term trends, the public sphere may also fluctuate importantly within shorter time periods. During close election campaigns or political crises, for instance, the media pay more attention to political issues than during times of routine politics.

These structural and conjunctural shifts and fluctuations imply that the public sphere is a *loosely* bounded space, but at any particular time and place it is a *bounded* space nonetheless. The number of channels of communication (newspapers, magazines, radio stations, television networks, etc.) and the size of their respective news holes (pages, broadcasting time, etc.) are by necessity limited. Compared to this available communicative space, groups and individuals in modern democratic societies make a huge number of attempts to insert messages in the public sphere.[13] The strong disproportion between the available space in the public sphere and the number of messages that are potential candidates for inclusion in it, implies a high level of competition among groups who aim to get their messages across in the public discourse. To understand the dynamics of this competition, we need to begin by distinguishing two categories of actors: the *gatekeepers* of the public discourse, on the one hand, and the s*peakers* of communicative messages, on the other.[14] The gatekeepers of the public discourse are those who decide which messages to include in the particular communicative channel that they are responsible for, and how large and how prominently these messages will be displayed. The selectivity of coverage and the mechanisms of allocating prominence to messages are quite well known for the traditional media and include decisions about the size and placement of articles, or the amount and primacy of airing time. Even in the seemingly non-hierarchical internet, providers, internet browsers, and search engines pre-structure access to information

on the web in such a way that certain sites are more easily and more frequently accessed than they would have been in the absence of such gatekeeping.

The actions of gatekeepers produce the first and most basic selection mechanism in the public sphere that I distinguish: *visibility*.[15] Visibility depends on the number of communicative channels by which a message is included and the prominence of such inclusion. It ranges from "invisible" messages that are not included in any channel at all, via messages with limited visibility, which are, for example, only covered by local media, to "obtrusive" messages that are displayed prominently by most channels. Visibility is a necessary condition for a message to influence the public discourse, and, other things being equal, the amount of visibility that gatekeepers allocate to a message increases its potential to diffuse further in the public sphere.[16]

From communications and media research we know quite a lot about the so-called "news values" that structure the decisions of journalists and editors to assign newsworthiness to events or not. These include, for instance, (geographical) proximity, the prominence and prestige of the speaker, the level of conflict related to the message or the actor, the relevance of an issue, possibilities for dramatization and personalization, and the novelty of a story.[17] With the exception of the proximity factor, these news values are not given characteristics of events, actors, or messages that exist outside of, and prior to the discursive realm. They are to an important extent a product of previous rounds of public discourse, from which notions of who is considered to be prominent, and which issues are considered relevant or controversial have emerged.

Social movement organizers and other public actors know about these selection criteria and try to anticipate them in how they bring their messages across. Many modern protests, including Greenpeace-style professional direct action, as well as more grassroots forms such as anti-globalization protests at international summits, are to an important extent scripted and staged to maximize the chances of drawing media attention. However, there are severe limits to the degree to which actors can influence the amount of visibility that is allocated to their messages. Speakers can manipulate only a small range of aspects of newsworthiness, and much depends on how news values such as prominence or relevance have come to be defined in past public discourse. As a result, statements by "important" politicians tend to get covered to a large extent regardless of their substantive content or

original presentation, whereas less prominent actors have to go to great lengths in order to realize their slight chances of access to the public discourse.

This brings us to the role of other speakers in shaping the diffusion chances of a particular actor's messages in the public sphere. Other speakers are the main source of two additional selection mechanisms: resonance and legitimacy. Although gaining visibility is a necessary condition for communicative impact, the career of a discursive message is likely to remain stillborn if it does not succeed in provoking reactions from other actors in the public sphere. The degree to which a message provokes such reactions I call *resonance*.[18] Resonance is important for at least two reasons. First, messages that resonate travel farther. Through the reactions of other actors, the message of the original speaker is at least partially reproduced and may reach new audiences. For instance, actors such as social movements who themselves lack prominence and other discursive resources may receive an enormous boost if established political actors express sympathy for their demands. Such support carries the message to the constituency of the ally in question, and allows the message to profit from that actor's prominence and prestige. This form of supportive resonance we may call *consonance*. Consonance often takes the form of favorable verbal statements, but includes in principle any public action that signals support, endorsement, or encouragement of the actor, his actions, or his aims, e.g., court rulings in favor of an actor, or executive action meeting the actor's demands.

Even negative resonance, or *dissonance*, may be helpful to the diffusion of the original message.[19] The maxim that "any publicity is good publicity" also holds for political messages: even the rejection of a demand has to reproduce that demand and thereby diffuses it further in the public sphere. Dissonance includes any form of public action that condemns, expresses disagreement with, or actively counters an actor, his actions, or his aims, ranging from unfavorable verbal statements to various forms of repression, as well as countermobilization by political opponents.

Of course, the reproduction of messages by way of resonance is always imperfect. Even in the case of consonance, allies are likely to support or emphasize only certain aspects of the original speaker's message. The distortion of the original message is of course likely to be even stronger in the case of dissonant reactions. Nevertheless,

even a strongly negative public reaction to a message has to reproduce the original message to at least some extent and thereby always runs the risk of providing potential imitators with a model for successful public action. For example, airplane hijackings with a high public resonance are much more likely to inspire copycat events than similar actions that provoke little resonance from the side of other public actors.[20] The second reason why resonance is important is that it increases the actor's chances to herself reproducing her message in the public sphere. Messages that resonate, be it negatively or positively, become in the eyes of journalists and editors more relevant and the actors behind them more prominent, thus increasing the speaker's chances to achieve a high level of visibility for similar messages in the future.

While to some extent we can treat consonance and dissonance as having similar effects because they both increase a message's salience, in other respects it must matter what the balance is between negative and positive responses. The degree to which, on average, reactions by third actors in the public sphere support or reject an actor or her claims, we may call *legitimacy*. Defined in such a way, legitimacy is independent of resonance. Highly legitimate messages may have no resonance at all because they are uncontroversial, while highly illegitimate messages may resonate strongly (e.g., anti-Semitic violence in Germany). All other things being equal, one might expect legitimacy to have a positive effect on the diffusion chances of a message, but because of the complex relation of legitimacy to resonance and visibility, other things will rarely be equal. Ideally, the speaker would like high resonance and high legitimacy, but will usually have to settle for less because normally high resonance is only achieved at the cost of an increase in controversiality and thereby a net decrease in legitimacy. All in all, then, we may perhaps expect a curvilinear relation between a message's chances of diffusion and its legitimacy, with messages whose legitimacy is controversial generally better placed than either highly legitimate or highly illegitimate messages.

Together, the notion of a bounded communicative space that can only accommodate a small minority of the variegated candidates for entry, on the one hand, and the selection mechanisms of visibility, resonance, and legitimacy, on the other, form the basic building blocks of an evolutionary model that allows us to explain why some actors and some messages flourish and others perish in the competition for the scarce resources of public attention and legitimacy.

I use the term "evolutionary" not as a synonym for development, nor to refer to progress or to genetic foundations of human behavior, but to denote a particular set of mechanisms for explaining change, both biological and social. Perhaps the most central idea at the basis of Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory – inspired by Thomas Malthus' work on population growth – was the insight of a severe discrepancy between the number of individuals of any species that can be sustained by a particular ecosystem, and the exponential reproduction rate of each species in the absence of environmental constraints.[21] The logical conclusion is that only a small part of the offspring of any species will be able to survive, and this in turn implies heavy competition, both between individuals of any given species, and between different species with overlapping ecological niches. Darwin's second insight was that there was variation within each species – as well as, of course, between species – and that this necessarily implied that some individuals or species would have better chances of surviving and producing offspring under particular environmental conditions than others. As a result, the average characteristics of any population will gradually change as a function of environmental selective pressures, and given enough time such change may culminate in the formation of new species.

This, in a nutshell, is the process of natural selection. Contrary to what is sometimes thought, the most important source of selection in Darwin's eyes was not so much the physical environment (e.g., climate or topography), but the biological environment in the form of food and prey, predators, parasites, and competitors.[22] In that sense, it is better to speak of *co-evolution*, since evolutionary change consists of many different agents evolving simultaneously and in close interaction, changes in one species depending on, as well as affecting many others.[23] This is also the reason why evolutionary processes are contingent, why their outcomes cannot generally be anticipated by the actors involved, and why there is a great discrepancy between evolutionary theory's explanatory power regarding past events and its very limited ability to predict the future. The great appeal of evolutionary theory lies in its potential to explain very complex outcomes through the interplay of just a few key mechanisms: variation, environmental selection, and differential reproduction.

My claim is that this type of explanation can also be applied to complex social dynamics, and to the dynamics of contentious interaction in the public sphere in particular. Of course, this is not an entirely new idea. The approach advanced here builds on various attempts in different

fields of sociological enquiry that draw on evolutionary thinking to explain social change.[24] These include macro-sociological and systems theories;[25] evolutionary game theory,[26] population ecology approaches in organizational sociology,[27] as well as Hilgartner and Bosk's work on the careers of social problems.[28]

Analogous to a natural ecosystem, the public sphere is a bounded communicative space in which a variety of organizations, groups, and individuals compete for the scarce resources of public attention and legitimacy. Given the restricted communicative space available, only a small proportion of candidate messages will be included (visibility), of these only some will be further diffused through the reactions of other actors (resonance), and of these in turn only some will achieve the status of legitimacy. Some contentious actors will be more successful than others in gaining public attention and legitimacy – sometimes because of more effective strategies, but often as a result of the unanticipated reactions of other public actors. As a result of selection and differential diffusion in the public sphere, the balance of discursive power among actors will evolve over time. Similarly, discursive selection affects the evolution of the repertoire of single actors. Some of an actor's public actions will attract more attention and will attain greater legitimacy than others, which will result in a repertoire shift towards the more successful tactics, aims, or frames.[29] Such repertoire shifts may result from conscious strategic choices, but because of the difficulty of anticipating other public actors' reactions they will often arise as emergent effects from contentious interaction, as in the case of the German radical right discussed further below.

Bridging the gap between opportunity structures and movement action

To prevent a radically constructionist reading of my argument along the lines of "everything is text," I want to emphasize that the discursive opportunities I have highlighted are not free-floating media creations that are independent of extra-medial power relations. To begin with, much of mass media content consists of statements and actions by non-media actors. Even if journalists and editors present us a small and not necessarily representative selection of these statements and actions, they cannot choose the raw material they must draw on. Moreover, some of the most important selection criteria they use are not independent from extra-medial power relations. For instance, the relevance and privileged access attributed by the media to "prominent" actors such

as government spokespersons depends crucially on the fact that these actors *are* more politically relevant than others, whether the media like it or not. Perhaps the media reinforce the dominance of institutional actors, but by and large they have to live with that dominance just like ordinary citizens do. Even so, it is crucial that what we are provided by the media are only highly selective slices from the potential input of political events, statements, and actions. Only these slices of reality become publicly known, and as such they form the information basis for actors' evaluation of the effects of their actions, and other actors' decisions on how to react to them. Of course, actors may in addition have media-independent information, beliefs, and assumptions about each other's intentions and behavior, but mediated information is the most important or single source for many actors, and beliefs and assumptions are to an important extent influenced by past media discourse.

This insight can be helpful to resolve an issue that scholars of social movements and collective action have long struggled with, namely the linkage between structure and action.[30] On the one side, we find those who emphasize the constraining and facilitating role of structural contexts, particularly so-called political opportunity structures.[31] On the other side, we find approaches that put agency at the center of analysis and emphasize the purposive mobilization of material resources[32] and symbolic frames[33] as the driving force behind collective action. One would be hard-pressed to find representatives on either side of this divide, who would not agree that a combination of both is needed.

Gamson and Meyer have emphasized that political opportunities must be perceived and are subject to interpretation or framing before they can effectively influence movement activists' decisions.[34] Radicalizing this view, Goodwin and Jasper state that "(t)here may be no such thing as objective political opportunities before or beneath interpretation – or at least none that matter; they are all interpreted through cultural filters."[35] Further in the same piece, the authors go a step further and claim that "in many cases perceptions can create opportunities,"[36] echoing Gamson and Meyer's point that by their actions, movements can make opportunities for themselves, as well as for other collective actors.[37] The consequence – explicitly intended by Goodwin and Jasper – of such a subjectivist and voluntaristic view on political opportunities is that it robs the concept of its structural character and puts agency firmly in the drivers' seat. Rather than solving the structure–agency problem, this invites the usual weaknesses of agency-based explanations, namely that they have no convincing answer to the question why certain

perceptions and interpretations of the political reality spread, but many others not, and why certain actors may effectively succeed in opening new windows of opportunity, but most do not. Moreover, the agency-oriented perspective does not illuminate the origins of the interests, identities, beliefs, assumptions, and expectations on which actors base their decisions on if and how to act.

Obviously, I cannot offer a comprehensive solution to the problem of the linkage of opportunity structures and movement action in this article. I want to suggest, however, that an important part of the solution may lie in the way in which the public sphere mediates between political opportunity structures and movement action. Most ordinary people, including most activists, are not full-time political analysts, who closely follow and gather independent information on what is going on in the bastions and corridors of power, and who have an intimate knowledge of the institutional intricacies of the political system. What most people know about politics is what they know from the media. The critics of political opportunity structure theory are right when they point out that factors such as "electoral instability," "elite divisions," or "availability of elite allies" that are mentioned in the political opportunity literature have no meaning as long as people do not become aware of them. However, such awareness is not a question of free interpretation – regardless of whether such interpretation takes the form of rational choice or cultural framing – on the basis of full and perfect information, but can only arise on the basis of the limited information that becomes publicly available, and the statements and actions of elite actors that become publicly visible. Just as protests that receive no media coverage at all are in the words of Gamson and Wolfsfeld "nonevents," regime weaknesses and openings that do not become publicly visible may be considered "non-opportunities," which for all practical intents and purposes might as well not exist at all.

Thus, the perception and interpretation of political opportunity structures is to an important extent pre-structured by the mass media content. This does not imply that there is nothing left to interpret and to choose from for movement activists, but it does mean that the range of information to draw on and the set of available interpretations to choose from have been narrowed down substantially. Paraphrasing the famous one-liner about the role of agency in history one might say that people make their own history, but on the basis of an information input not of their own making. As I have argued above, the outcome of this selection process by which some of what is going on in the political process

becomes visible, resonant, and legitimate and much else less so or not at all, depends partly on factors internal to the media production process, such as news values, news routines, and editorial cultures. However, most of the news content consists of statements and actions by non-media actors and reflects to an important (but not perfect) extent the extra-medial power relations among actors.

Yet, the mass media public sphere is not a one-way street, even if the traffic regulations are biased in favor of the top–down flow of communication. Although a great share of them fail, the sheer number of attempts to intervene from below in public contention in democratic societies ensures that some pass the selection gates of the media and thereby become visible for new recruits, allies, opponents, and authorities. Only when they achieve such visibility can movement actions, proposals, and interpretive frames enter the range of vision of other actors and perhaps start to influence their behavior. This may include provoking reactions by others, which one may see as "making" opportunities, although "making manifest" or "revealing" would perhaps be more appropriate. For example, public protest from below may intensify or bring into the open conflicts of interest within the elite that had remained contained or latent before.

An empirical illustration: Right-wing violence in Germany[38]

In September 1991, widely publicized anti-foreigner riots occurred in the East German town of Hoyerswerda.[39] At the time of the riots, about 200 foreigners, out of a total population of 70,000, lived in the town. Looking only at what happened locally, the events in Hoyerswerda were not very different from typical 18th-century events. They began with an attack by a group of right-wing skinheads on Vietnamese street salesmen on a city square, followed by a nightly attack against a building where some of the Vietnamese as well as a group of guestworkers from Mozambique lived. The attacks, which involved throwing bottles and stones and shouting racist abuse, continued the following two nights, and increasingly the skinheads were joined by local youth without ties to the right-wing scene. Increasing numbers of local citizens came to watch the events, many of them applauding and cheering the attackers.

Only on the fourth night, after the local police had finally tightened security around the guestworker building, did the rioters turn to a hostel in a different part of town where a few dozen asylum seekers lived.

During the first days, the riots had drawn little media coverage, especially in the national media, but the expansion of the riots to the asylum seeker hostel boosted national media attention and became the dominant interpretive frame for the riots. The media described the event as an anti-asylum seeker riot, and national as well as local politicians of all political leanings issued statements and held press conferences, stating their opinion on the consequences that the events should (or should not) have for asylum policies. Conservative politicians argued that the events showed that asylum seekers had become an insupportable burden for the German population, while their left-wing counterparts accused the conservatives of inciting the riots with their demand to limit asylum rights. The events ended after 6 days with the widely publicized evacuation by the authorities of what were by then summarily called "asylum seekers" (even though the large majority of them were not) from the town, and the local radical right's proud declaration of Hoyerswerda as the first "foreigner-free" city in Germany.

The public interpretation of the Hoyerswerda events as a riot against asylum seekers must be seen in the light of the fact that they occurred during a highly publicized and controversial public debate on asylum legislation, which had started about a month earlier. The claim that this debate "caused" the events in Hoyerswerda is far-fetched, given the fact that asylum seekers were neither the initial, nor the main targets of the rioters. However, the discursive context of the asylum controversy had the effect that the events were seen by the media and interpreted by politicians through the lens of this debate. Hoyerswerda became politically relevant as an anti-asylum seeker riot, and this connected the public resonance of the asylum debate to the Hoyerswerda events. It was within this discursive framework that "Hoyerswerda" became a widely publicized icon with a distinct national political meaning – rather than the mainly locally embedded and indiscriminate outburst of racism that it originally was. The Hoyerswerda events subsequently led to a further intensification of the asylum debate, as well as an enormous upsurge all over the country in radical right attacks that were heavily focused on asylum seekers. Other radical right groups copied Hoyerswerda as a successful example not for what it really had been, but as it had appeared in media reports and in the reactions of national politicians. The message that was conveyed to radical right activists by the reports and reactions in the media was that attacks on asylum seekers were a recipe for prominent media coverage, wide resonance across the political spectrum, and last but not least, for a certain degree of legitimacy, as many politicians at least

partly blamed the victims and the problems they caused for the native population.

The relevance of the public controversy over asylum policy becomes clearer still if we compare the impact of the September 1991 events to that of very similar attacks on Hoyerswerda's small guestworker population that had occurred more than a year earlier, in May 1990.[40] At that time, there were no asylum seekers yet in Hoyerswerda, nor were asylum policy or other immigration issues very salient on the public agenda, as Germany was still preparing for monetary union and reunification. Unlike the 1991 events, the 1990 riot received hardly any media attention and remained an isolated and "insignificant" event that did not spread to other locations.

In order not to draw on just one prominent example, we can alternatively approach the development of radical right violence in Germany from the broader perspective of the whole population of such events in the 1990s.[41] Across the decade, right-wing attacks were directed against a broad spectrum of target groups, which in one way or another were seen by the radical right as undesired elements or enemies of the "national" cause. Apart from asylum seekers and other immigrant groups, this target range included left-wing groups, homosexuals, handicapped people, tourists, journalists, priests, the police, and of course the radical right's usual suspect, the country's Jewish community. In addition, radical right groups demolished memorials to the Second World War and the Holocaust. Quite often also, the violence of skinhead groups seemed to lack any political motivation whatsoever, e.g., when they demolished cars or attacked ordinary Germans leaving discotheques or bars.

In the year 1990 and the first half of 1991 – before the onset of the asylum controversy – the radical right's target repertoire reflected this broad range of variation. In line with the anti-communist mood just after the fall of the Wall, the largest number of attacks (29%) was directed against left-wing groups and symbols, including some attacks against Soviet soldiers who were still stationed in the former GDR, as well as an attempt to destroy a statue of the communist playwright Bertold Brecht. Second (26%) came attacks with no discernable political motivation directed against random targets. Together, asylum seekers (9%) and other immigrant groups (17%) made up only one quarter of the radical right's targets. Jewish targets (mostly graveyards) and the police were the most important remaining objects of the radical right's hatred (both

8%). Meanwhile, the aggregate number of events remained at a low and relatively stable level, with 40 attacks nationwide in 1990, and 26 in the first half of 1991.

In July and August 1991, the public controversy over asylum rights began gathering force, first in the national press, then also on television. Until the events in Hoyerswerda the potential visibility, resonance, and legitimacy that this debate offered remained by and large an unseized opportunity for the radical right, but Hoyerwerda changed this radically. Almost by accident, Hoyerswerda's skinhead scene had stumbled on an action model – attacks against asylum seeker hostels – that was subsequently widely copied by right-wing groups elsewhere because it seemed to guarantee not only media attention, but also favorable reactions by national as well as local politicians, and even substantive success in the form of the removal of the victims rather than the arrest of the perpetrators.

The asylum debate raged on for another 2 years and was according to surveys continuously seen by the public as the most important problem facing the country, in spite of mass unemployment and other difficulties related to the reunification process.[42] The public visibility, resonance, and legitimacy that went with this new discursive context dramatically improved the diffusion chances of radical right violence. In the second half of 1991, the number of attacks rose to 140 (against 26 in the first half of the year), and another 311 attacks occurred from January 1992 until the end of June 1993, when the asylum controversy was finally closed with a change in the Constitution that strongly limited the rights of asylum seekers. Subsequently, the number of attacks decreased substantially, although it remained somewhat higher than before the asylum debate (on average 64 attacks per year).

In line with the theoretical argument developed above, the asylum debate had a very selective impact on different types of radical right violence. The number of attacks against asylum seekers increased more than 30-fold compared to the period before July 1991, and asylum seekers accounted for 55% of all targets during the heyday of the asylum debate from July 1991 until June 1993. Attacks directed against other immigrant groups also increased, but less so, by about a factor of eight. This is probably the combined result of the fact that the public debate did not always neatly differentiate between asylum seekers and other immigrants, and that it was not always easy for the attackers to make that

distinction either. By contrast, the numbers of all other forms of radical right violence remained virtually unchanged (an overall increase of only 27%) and violence against some targets, such as left-wing groups, even declined. The share of violence directed against non-immigrant targets declined dramatically from 74% prior to July 1991, to 18% during the asylum controversy. After the disappearance of the asylum issue from the top of the public agenda, the target repertoire of the radical right shifted again, the most pronounced change affecting the share of asylum seekers among the targets of violence, which declined to 21% (from 55%) after July 1993.

In summary, the context of the public controversy over asylum rights dramatically enhanced the reproduction chances of some forms of radical right violence, while leaving other forms unaffected. The result was a strong increase in the number of radical right events, as media attention and resonant reactions by politicians and other public actors carried the message of right-wing pioneers such as the skinheads of Hoyerswerda to every corner of the country, inspiring groups elsewhere – mostly without there being any organizational contacts or informal network connections between these groups – to follow their example. Along with the increase in the number of events went a dramatic shift in the target repertoire of the radical right, which narrowed down from a relatively broad range of targets at the beginning of the 1990s, to a very strong focus on asylum seekers and to a lesser extent other immigrant groups.

All this may partly have been the result of purposive strategic decisions by radical right activists, but the extent to which this was the case was probably limited, given the high degree of spontaneity that characterized many of these events, and the low level of political sophistication of most of the perpetrators.[43] Anyway, a simple trial-and-error process that requires no forward-looking planning and anticipation can account for the changes in the volume and targets of radical right violence. Assuming that (potential) right-wing activists copy the successful examples they hear about through the media, and that they repeat past strategies of their own that were successful in gaining visibility, resonance, and legitimacy (and discontinue those that were not), the outcomes described above follow logically. We do not even need to assume conscious perception of the availability of opportunities on the side of the radical right; it suffices that they imitate or continue to do what they learn about and what appears to work.[44]

Conclusions

I would like to conclude my discussion of selection mechanisms and evolutionary dynamics in the public sphere with some remarks on the limitations as well as on the further potential of this approach. To begin with the first, it bears repeating that not everything about contentious interaction is mediated and that direct encounters with fellow activists, opponents, and authorities remain central to the activist experience. My point is not to deny these experiences' relevance, but to point out that without the communicative linkages of the public sphere, such experiences would – like the "forgotten" Hoyerswerda riots of 1990 – remain isolated events that may be highly salient to those who were there and lived through them, but would not have the potential to diffuse and affect the wider society.

The second relativization that is appropriate is that the mass media are not the only channel through which events and experiences can be communicated across time and space. Movements' own media are one possibility, but they have the important limitation that they only preach to the converted. The more important alternatives to communicative linkages through the mass media are social and organizational networks. The mass media have the advantage that they are a channel that allows messages to spread very quickly very widely. However, as we have seen, they are also a highly selective environment in which movements face adversaries and competitors who are generally better placed to find a sympathetic hearing for their messages. As a result, reliance on the mass media makes movements dependent on what others define as important and legitimate, as is illustrated by the German radical right's strong dependence on the discursive context of the asylum controversy. The communication of claims, strategic models, and other movement messages through the horizontal channels of social and organizational networks is certainly slower and usually more limited in reach. Yet, the diffusion of movement messages through these channels may also be more stable and durable, less easily disturbed by the fashions and fads of the media and policy agendas, and – especially when the network links are strong – can be helpful in overcoming collective action problems.[45] Important as networks may be for getting mobilization off the ground and for stabilizing it, in the end movements must face the task of influencing those with whom they do *not* have bonds of co-operation and solidarity, be they political authorities, societal groups they oppose, or the mass public, whose sympathies have to be won in order to obtain a favorable outcome. To fulfill that

task, there is in modern democracies often no way around the mass media.

The further potential of the approach proposed here lies in applying a similar evolutionary perspective to other aspects of contentious politics. The large discrepancy between the number of claims that vie for inclusion and the relatively small number that can be accommodated is a central characteristic of contentious politics more generally. Without this discrepancy, politics would resemble a Garden of Eden and would not be contentious at all. Of course, in other arenas contenders may compete for different resources than visibility, resonance, and legitimacy.[46] For instance, in the policy arena, access to the political agenda and budgetary allocation will be central. However, from whichever angle we look at contentious politics, we will always find strong selection processes that eliminate most attempts and let only a few pass through. This implies that we need to start thinking of contentious action in terms of populations of events, or better, perhaps, populations of characteristics of events, rather than the focus on movements as single, unified entities that has predominated in the literature.[47]

Another aspect of the model developed here that seems to have wider relevance is the view of movements as carriers of messages – an idea proposed long ago by the late Alberto Melucci.[48] This idea puts communicative processes and linkages at the center of analysis. Placed in an evolutionary perspective, this implies a focus on movements not so much in terms of growth or decline, radicalization or institutionalization, or any other type of change affecting whole entities, but in terms of the differential diffusion rates of messages – which can be substantive claims, interpretive frames, or strategic models – along channels of communication. Here I have developed this idea for the channel of the mass media, but it seems promising to look from this angle also at diffusion processes and selection mechanisms across network links.[49]

Finally, understood as co-evolution, an approach along the lines advocated in this article offers a way of theorizing the focus on interactions and mechanisms that is currently advocated as an alternative to structuralist and purposive explanations.[50] Evolutionary theory can provide the theoretical backbone for such an interactionist view on contentious politics that bridges structure and action.[51]

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Notes

1. Charles Tilly, *The Contentious French* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986); Charles Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758–1834* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
2. See Dominique Wisler and Marco Giugni, "Under the Spotlight: The Impact of Media Attention on Protest Policing," *Mobilization* 4 (1999): 203–222; Donatella Della Porta and Herbert Reiter, editors, *Policing Protest* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
3. E.g., Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).
4. Charlotte Ryan, *Prime Time Activism* (Boston: South End Press, 1991).
5. E.g., M.H. Danzger, "Validating Conflict Data," *American Sociological Review* 40 (1975): 570–584; David Snyder and William R. Kelly, "Conflict Intensity, Media Sensitivity and the Validity of Newspaper Data," *American Sociological Review* 42 (1977): 105–123.
6. E.g., Dieter Rucht, Ruud Koopmans and Friedhelm Neidhardt, editors, *Acts of Dissent* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999); John D. McCarthy, Clark McPhail and Jackie Smith, "Images of Protest: Estimating Selection Bias in Media Coverage of Washington Demonstrations, 1982, 1991," *American Sociological Review* 61(1996): 478–499; Pamela E. Oliver and Gregory Maney, "Political Processes and Local Newspaper Coverage of Protest Events: From Selection Bias to Triadic Interactions," *American Journal of Sociology* 106 (2000): 463–505.
7. Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
8. E.g., William A. Gamson, "Political Discourse and Collective Action," in Bert Klandermans, Hanspeter Kriesi and Sidney Tarrow, editors, *From Structure to Action* (Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press, 1988), 219–244.
9. William A. Gamson and Gadi Wolfsfeld, "Movements and Media as Interacting Systems," *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* 528 (1993): 116.
10. See Bert Klandermans and Sjoerd Goslinga, "Media Discourse, Movement Publicity, and the Generation of Collective Action Frames: Theoretical and Empirical Exercises in Meaning Construction," in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, editors, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 312–337.
11. Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).
12. This conclusion is – at least in a relative sense – less disheartening for movement activists than it may seem at first sight. What is true for social movements, applies, albeit somewhat less visibly, also to established actors' attempts to shape political and cultural change. In the history of political parties, labor unions, military

campaigns, or coup d'états, failures also easily outnumber the success stories. In an even wider perspective, mass extinction with few survivors characterizes the whole history of human culture; e.g., languages, religions, technologies, or businesses.

13. See also John D. McCarthy, Jackie Smith and Mayer N. Zald, "Accessing Public, Media, Electoral, and Governmental Agendas," in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, editors, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 294.
14. Friedhelm Neidhardt, "Öffentlichkeit, öffentliche Meinung, soziale Bewegungen," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, special issue 34 (1994): 7–41. As will become clear in the empirical part of this article, the notion of "speaker" is here meant in a broad sense, and includes those who "speak" through nonverbal messages, such as violence against immigrants.
15. Visibility is related to Gamson and Wolfsfeld's notion of standing (see "Movements and media as interacting systems," 121). However, standing is an attribute of an actor, whereas visibility results from the ensemble of characteristics of a message, which includes the actor or speaker, but also the form (e.g., violence generally enhances visibility) or the message's substantive content.
16. See for empirical evidence of this mechanism Daniel J. Myers, "The Diffusion of Collective Violence: Infectiousness, Susceptibility, and Mass Media Networks," *American Journal of Sociology* 106 (2000): 173–208.
17. See, for example, Johan Galtung and Marie Homboe Ruge, "The Structure of Foreign News. The Presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises in Four Norwegian Newspapers," *Journal of Peace Research* 2 (1965): 64–91; Winfried Schulz, *Die Konstruktion von Realität in den Nachrichtenmedien* (Freiburg: Alber, 1976); Pamela A. Oliver and Daniel J. Myers, "How Events Enter the Public Sphere: Conflict, Location, and Sponsorship in Local Newspaper Coverage of Public Events," *American Journal of Sociology* 105 (1999): 38–87; Peter Hocke, *Massenmedian und lokaler Protest* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2002).
18. In developing these concepts I have been inspired by the work on collective action frames of David Snow and his colleagues: David A. Snow, E. Burke Rochford Jr., Steven K. Worden, and Robert D. Benford, "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation," *American Sociological Review* 51 (1986): 464–481; David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest," in Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller, editors, *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 133–155. See also William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani, "Media Discourse on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach," *American Journal of Sociology* 95 (1989): 1–37. My approach differs from these authors in that I do not focus on the particular actor of interest's own discursive mobilization strategies, but on the – largely strategically unanticipated – reactions that actors encounter once they enter the public sphere. Thus, I emphasize the effects of the discursive context, while Snow and his colleagues emphasize the internal perspective of the discursive strategies of social movement activists and organizers. These two perspectives are obviously complementary rather than mutually exclusive.
19. I thank Thom Duyvené de Wit for suggesting to me this distinction between consonance and dissonance as two types of resonance.

20. Robert T. Holden, "The Contagiousness of Aircraft Hijacking," *American Journal of Sociology* 91 (1986): 874–904.
21. Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (London: Penguin, 1968 [1859]), 117–118.
22. Ibid., 123ff.
23. For a recent application of the idea of co-evolution to social movements, see Pamela E. Oliver and Daniel J. Myers, "The Coevolution of Social Movements," *Mobilization* 8 (2003): 1–24.
24. Recent publications arguing for the usefulness of evolutionary mechanisms and processes to explaining sociological phenomena include Bernd Baldus, "Darwin und die Soziologie. Kontingenz, Aktion und Struktur im menschlichen Sozialverhalten," *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 31 (2002): 316–331; and Stanley Lieberson and Freda B. Lynn, "Barking Up the Wrong Branch: Scientific Alternatives to the Current Model of Sociological Science," *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002): 1–19.
25. E.g., W. G. Runciman, *A Treatise on Social Theory, vol. 2: Substantive Social Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1989); Niklas Luhmann, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1997).
26. E.g., Robert Axelrod, "An Evolutionary Approach to Norms," *American Political Science Review* 80 (1986): 1095–1111; Michael Macy, "Natural Selection and Social Learning in Prisoner's Dilemma. Coadaptation with Genetic Algorithms and Artificial Neural Networks," *Sociological Methods and Research* 25 (1996): 103–137.
27. E.g., Michael T. Hannan and Glenn R. Carroll, *Dynamics of Organizational Populations. Density, Legitimation, and Competition* (Oxford University Press, 1992); Michael T. Hannan and John Freeman, *Organizational Ecology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).
28. Stephen Hilgartner and Charles L. Bosk, "The Rise and Fall of Social Problems," *American Journal of Sociology* 94 (1988): 53–78.
29. The reproduction of messages in the public sphere is, however, usually imperfect for reasons explained above. This explains why there is no long-term tendency towards an increasingly uniform public discourse: if successful messages were reproduced unaltered, discursive opportunities would cumulate over time and the public discourse would soon converge on uniform standards of who and what is relevant and legitimate, and cease to be a discourse in the true sense of the word. Of course, even in democracies there is a high degree of self-reproduction in the public discourse: what was prominent, relevant, and legitimate yesterday is usually a good predictor of today's parameters. Ultimately, however, the public discourse is kept alive by the small minority of "distortions" or "mutations" rather than by the perfect reproduction of messages.
30. See, for example, Hanspeter Kriesi, "The Interdependence of Structure and Action: Some Reflections on the State of the Art," in Bert Klandermans, Hanspeter Kriesi and Sidney Tarrow, editors, *From Structure to Action* (Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press, 1988), 349–368; Mark I. Lichbach, "Contending Theories of Contentious Politics and the Structure-Action Problem of Social Order," *Annual Review of Political Science* 1 (1998): 401–424; Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, Charles Tilly, Francesca Polletta, Sidney Tarrow, David S. Meyer and Ruud Koopmans, "Mini-Symposium on Social Movements," *Sociological Forum* 14 (1999): 27–136.

31. E.g., Sidney Tarrow, *Democracy and Disorder* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Hanspeter Kriesi, Ruud Koopmans, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Marco G. Giugni, *New Social Movements in Western Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).
32. E.g., John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (1977): 1212–1241.
33. E.g., Snow et al., "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation."
34. William A. Gamson and David S. Meyer, "Framing Political Opportunity," in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, editors, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 275–290; see also Bert Klandermans, *The Social Psychology of Protest* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1997); and Doowun Suh, "How Do Political Opportunities Matter for Social Movements? Political Opportunity, Misframing, Pseudosuccess, and Pseudofailure," *The Sociological Quarterly* 42 (2001): 437–468.
35. Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, "Caught in Winding, Snarling Vine: The Structural Bias of Political Process Theory," *Sociological Forum* 14 (1999): 33.
36. Ibid., 52–53.
37. William A. Gamson and David S. Meyer, "Framing Political Opportunity," 276.
38. For a multivariate quantitative analysis of the determinants of right-wing violence in Germany that supports the interpretation given here, see Ruud Koopmans and Susan Olzak, "Discursive Opportunities and the Evolution of Right-Wing Violence in Germany," *American Journal of Sociology* 110 (2004).
39. For further information on these events, see Roger Karapin, "Major Anti-Minority Riots and National Legislative Campaigns Against Immigrants in Britain and Germany," in Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham, editors, *Challenging Immigration and Ethnic Relations Politics. Comparative European Perspectives* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 312–347.
40. Ibid.
41. The data I will refer to were drawn from a content analysis of the national broadsheet newspaper *Frankfurter Rundschau*. Comparisons for parts of the period with three East German regional newspapers, and with the tabloid *Bild Zeitung* revealed no substantial differences in the type and temporal distribution of reported events, even though the alternative sources reported many fewer events than the *Rundschau*. Further, the *Rundschau* data can be compared to police data compiled by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution. In line with the argument of this article, this comparison shows that less than 20% of all radical right violent actions were covered in the *Rundschau* (and much less still in the other newspapers). Of those events that were covered only one in five was prominently mentioned on the front page, the rest was dealt with in mostly small articles on the inside pages. Unfortunately, the police data are not differentiated by target. Therefore, I draw on the newspaper data to analyze the evolution of the target repertoire of right-wing violence.
42. See Dieter Roth, "Was bewegt den Wähler?" *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* no. 11 (1994): 3–13.
43. See Helmut Willems, Roland Eckert, Stefanie Würtz and Linda Steinmetz, *Fremdenfeindliche Gewalt. Einstellungen, Täter, Konflikteskalation* (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 1993).

44. For further discussion of the role in the dynamics of contentious politics of what I call (forward-looking) anticipation, (backward-looking) adaptation, and selection, see Ruud Koopmans, "Protest in Time and Space: The Evolution of Waves of Contention," in David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi, editors, *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 19–46.
45. See, for example, Michael Suk-Young Chwe, "Structure and Strategy in Collective Action," *American Journal of Sociology* 105 (1999): 128–156.
46. See John D. McCarthy, Jackie Smith and Mayer N. Zald, "Accessing Public, Media, Electoral, and Governmental Agendas."
47. See also Pamela A. Oliver and Daniel J. Myers, "The Coevolution of Social Movements."
48. E.g., in Alberto Melucci, *Nomads of the Present* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).
49. The mechanism of "brokerage" that figures prominently in Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, seems useful in this context.
50. Ibid.
51. See Ruud Koopmans, "Protest in Time and Space," for an application of the evolutionary perspective to the dynamics of waves of contention.